THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Export Trade Control Order No. E(C)O, 88|AM(91) dated 5-8-91 had been issued by the Government to prohibit the export of certain types of semi-finished leather which were being exported under the guise of finished leather. There is no ban on the export of finished leather.

362. [*Transferred to 2nd December, 1991*]

Import of Newsprint

363. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with Government to allow decanalisation of newsprint to enable newspapers to import directly or through trading houses; and

(b) what measures Government propose to take to curb steep rise of prices of newsprints in view of its service to the nation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The customs duty on the imported standard newsprint has been abolished to keep the price of the basic raw material at reasonable level. Adequate foreign exchange has also been released to import newsprint to meet the Demand-Supply gap.

Futility of the scheme of MPEDA for supply of diesel to fishing industry at subsidised rates

364. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the futility of the scheme of MPEDA to subsidise diesel fuel supplied to fishing industry due to cumbersome procedures;

(b) whether the industry has also represented on this matter;

(c) what are the reasons for ignoring units which exclusively operate deep sea fishing vessels without processing plants;

(d) whether it is a fact that shrimp caught by deep sea fishing vessels is totally for export;

(e) what steps are being taken to make the scheme feasible taking into account the plight of owners of fishing vessels without processing plants; and

(f) whether there is an excess capacity in marine products processing plants all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The Government feels that the scheme is useful and working satisfactorily.

(b) The Association of Indian Fisheries Industries, Vizag, has pleaded for extension of the scope of the scheme to include also such vessel owners as are not exporters.

(c) and (e) Owners of deep sea fishing vessels without processing plants can avail the benefit of the scheme if they export their catches directly or through merchant exporters; in the latter case, they have also to produce a disclaimer certificate from the merchant exporter or export house or the trading house.

(d) Bulk of shrimp catch is exported.

(f) The capacity utilisation in marine products processing plants is high during peak seasons as the capacity is geared to peak season requirements when landings are high. During offseasons the utilisation is low.